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New Albany Gazette

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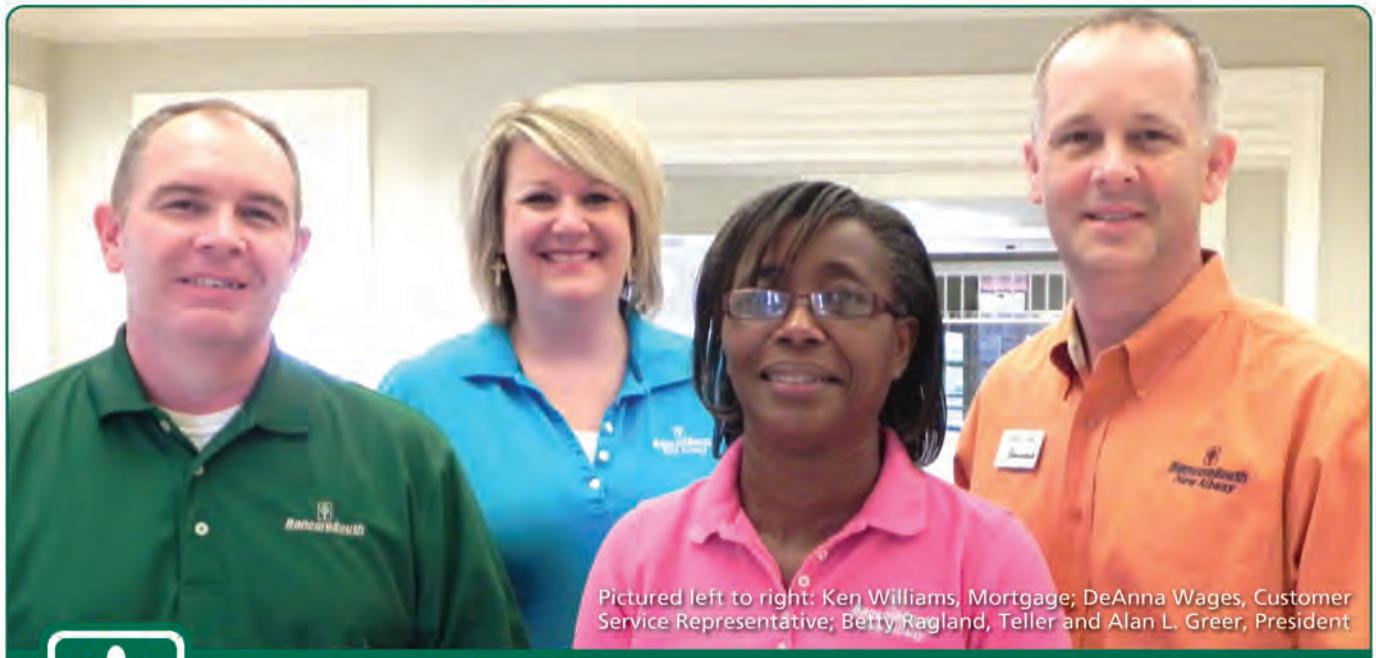

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On the cover

New Albany: #17 Chris Brown, #1 Tyreese White, #70 Aaron Pipkin, #7 Larenz Jones.
East Union: #5 D.J. Armstrong, #33 Jacob Elder, #75 Evan Bullock, #11 Blake Spruill.

Special Thanks

Ron Price, Scott Duley, Shane Sanderson, Josh Blythe, Andy Wilbanks, Marty Cook, Lisa Bogue, Dorothy Denton, Nathan McLellen, Kevin Williams, Chris Greer, Nathan Tidewell, Lashay Ashford, Darrell Ivy, and Lance Moore.

New Albany High School for use of the field for the cover photo.

This publication was designed, written and edited by Donica Phifer, Sports Editor, *The New Albany Gazette*
Cover photo by Donica Phifer

New Albany Gazette

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Moving Forward

The Bulldogs get back to business

Where the 2012 football season was a tribute to Head Coach Ron Price's late wife Amanda Price, the 2013 season will have a different tone.

"I think its time to move forward, but we will never move on. Not without her, I am who I am because of the support she gave me. New Albany Football is what it is because of Amanda; we built this program together," Price said.

That program includes a season of new faces and a new focus on the game now that the players, coaches, and community have had a chance to honor their biggest supporter.

"Amanda has a different view of the games, but she's still with us," Price said.

After the exit of the 17 seniors who manned the 2012 squad, the Bulldogs have new players who are set to fill key roles.

First on the list will be junior Bryce Collins who replaces Spencer Day at quarterback. Day totaled 17 wins as a starting QB for the Bulldogs, which is the sort of success that Price and the coaching staff hope for Collins to have.

"He's shown great leadership and work ethic through spring practice and summer workouts. It's just about getting experience and gaining the confidence needed to be a starting quarterback," Price said.

In Boston Newsome's vacated running back slot will be Devin Wilson, a guy who shares some similarities with the record breaker.

"It's in the way that he runs the ball along with his toughness and his attitude. He has a big hole to fill but I'm confident in his abilities," Price said.

"Every Friday night when the game is over, I just want to look at my kids and know that we've given everything that we could."
- Ron Price

Price and his staff will turn to Jimmy Baldwin for an additional spark on offense, lining him up in multiple positions to maximize his effect.

"Whenever he touched the ball last year, he made something good happen with it. We really want to increase the touches that he gets this year," Price said.

Sophomore Brauderick Boyd will be a standout in the receiving corps, and will give the passing game an edge, Price said.

On defense, Tyreese White and Tyrone Vance are the two seniors who are expected to lead the team.

White will see time starting at inside linebacker, while Vance will divide his appearances between defensive back and linebacker. He will also see time at wide receiver, Price said.

Another element to the game falls on the shoulders of junior Eathen Rainey, who takes the field as the kicker and punter for the Bulldogs.

"He's really one of our weapons, we are going to use him for everything - kickoff, punting, extra points, field goals - Eathen is our guy," Price said.

This year, the storied Highway 15 rivalry with Ripey, moves to the regular season closer on Nov. 1. The game also becomes a division match-up.

"It could be that we are playing for a playoff seed, one of us gets in and one goes home. It's such an intense rivalry and now its that much more important," Price said.

The Bulldogs have other goals beyond extending their win streak over the Tigers - namely making history as back-to-back division champions and a fourth round playoff appearance.

"I'd like us to get to Jackson, but first we have to get to the fourth round and maybe, if we are lucky, we'll get to hold up a gold football as state champions," Price said.

Head Coach Ron Price

Sixth season at NAHS

2012 Record: 8-5 (5-0) *2nd round playoff appearance

Assistant Coaches: Bob Monroe, Rolandus Cox, Josh Davis, Michael Kelly, Jalon Bullock, Jamie Coleman, Buddy Hall
Statistician: John Walker
Athletic Trainer: Mandy Wise

New Albany 2013 Schedule

August
16 @ Kossuth (Jamboree)
23 Water Valley
30 @ Itawamba

September
06 Pontotoc
13 Amory
20 @ Corinth
27 North Pontotoc (HC)

October
04 @ Senatobia*
11 Byhalia (Band Night)*
18 @ Lafayette*
25 Rosa Fort (Senior Night)*

November
01 @ Ripley *

* denotes Division 2-4A game

Darrell Ivy | *The Image Place*

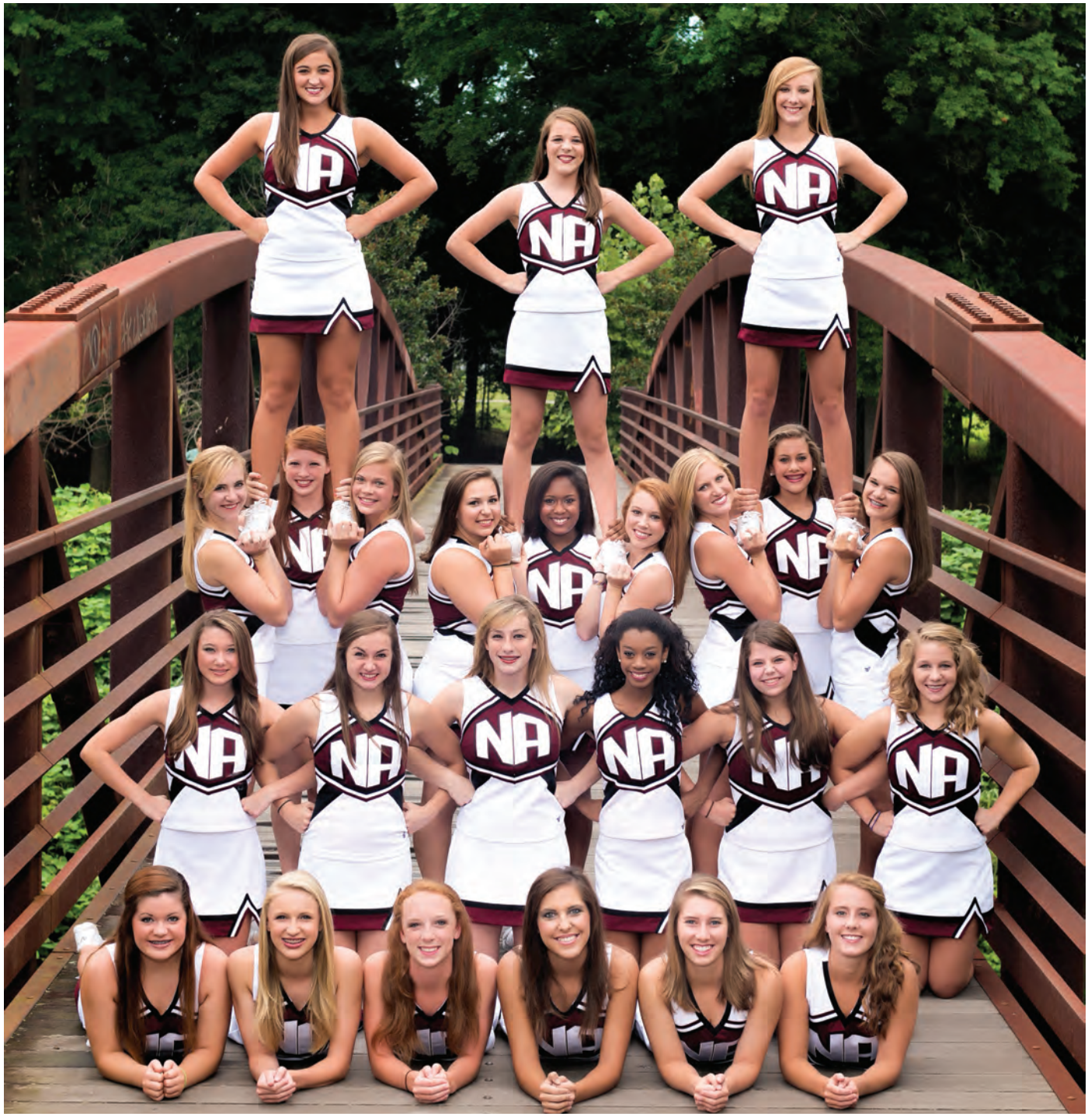
2013 New Albany Bulldogs Football Team - Tyreese White, Devin Wilson, Jarel Lipsey, Tyrone Vance, Nakomus Lawrence, Christopher Watson, Larenz Jones, Eli Jackson, Mikey Wood, Christopher Farr, Jimmy Baldon, Robert Franklin, Levi Bramlett, Eathen Rainey, Bryce Collins, Sam McMillin, Chris Brown, Christopher Elliott, Joseph Rainey, Justin Dean, Zack Simmons, Austin Cook, Keshaun Ball, Ethan Criswell, Braudrique Boyd, Dairius Carruthers, Eddie Barry, Matt Morris, Jon Robbins, Caleb Collins, Dakota Wood, Brandon Fowler, Hayes Trexler, Jacob Hall, Isaiah Powell, Hunter Wade, Caleb Vance, Perry McKinney, Will Carter, Sam Kirkland, Bryce Strong, Drew Welborn, Caleb Huspeth, Terry Montgomery, Overton Johnson, Roylee Contreras, Efrain Medina, Jacob Medlock, Sam Cagle, Cedric Buford, Miller Dunnam, Tevin Bradley, Jake McDonald, Payton Richey, Hunt Parks, Dylan Simmons, Johnny Pipkin, Darrel Cheairs, Michael Ferrell, Eli Hamblin, Rush Butler, Payton Hopkins, Owen James, Casey Fowler, Aaron Pipkin, Tyler Grooms, Chris Hines, Ben Cherry, Clayton Ledbetter, Devin King, Hunter Berryman, Luke Conlee, Rico Carpenter, Malik Tate, Destin Bryant, Jacob Smith. Athletic Trainer: Mandy Wise, Assistant Coaches: Jalon Bullock, Kelly Coleman, Rolandus Cox, Josh Davis, Buddy Hall, Michael Kelly. Head Coach: Ron Price.

Class of 2014 Seniors

Darrell Ivy | *The Image Place*

2013 New Albany Bulldogs Seniors - (Front Row: Left to Right) Elleigh Hall, Avery Campbell, Hannah Anderson, Allie Owen, (Second Row: Left to Right) Tyreese White, Tyrone Vance, Larenz Jones, Robert Franklin, Chris Brown, Keshaun Ball, (Third Row: Left to Right) Job Robbins, Jacob Hall, Sam Kirkland, Jacob Medlock, Dylan Simmons, Johnny Pipkin, Eli Hamblin, Owen James, Casey Fowler, Aaron Pipkin.

New Albany Cheerleaders



Darrell Ivy I *The Image Place*

2013-2014 New Albany Cheerleaders (Front Row: Left to Right) Olivia Thompson, Mary Day, Carley Adams, Allie Owens, Katie Davis, Martha Vance Alef, (Second Row: Left to Right) Laura Suzanne Creekmore, Quinlan Amos, D'Anna Gillon, Kierstyn McKenzie, Alli Hodges, Mary Scott Waldrop, (Third Row: Left to Right) Leeta Prather, Meghan Van, Kaitlyn White, Beth Teague, Elleigh Hall, Bailey Adams, (Fourth Row: Left to Right) Reese Neely, Asiana Judon, Lauren Paige Hamilton, (Fifth Row [Top]: Left to Right) Hannah Anderson, Chloe Lang, Avery Campbell.

Pride of New Albany High School Band

Darrell Ivy | *The Image Place*

2013-2014 Pride of New Albany Band Members - Kirsten Greer, Katie Brooks, Sheyanne Frazier, Quin'shay Perkins, Mallory Neal, Hailey Boone, Emily Blackwell, Rebecca Willis, Stacy Hernandez, Ali Buskirk, Rachel Lenior, Alexis Crockett, Tabitha Foster, Trinity Dye, Tristan Estrada, Peyton Neal, Sarah Hajeh, Armonti McNeese, Josh Richey, Alyssa Coleman, Isaiah Powell, Sarah Bain, Oceana Finley, Sasha Briggs, Carmen Samuelson, Jose Castro, Joseph Rutherford, Harrison Harding, Abby Roaton, Jack Hickey, Jonathan Stacy, Issac Estrada, Sydney Fowler, Caryn Gillean, Lindsay Sappington, Jocelyn Moldanado, Sam Hickey, Jose Sanchez, Jacob McGregor, Jaylen Anthony, Ethan WIlson, Hunter Berryman, Tanner Harding, J.T. Wiggins, Shelby Cook, Jon Jarvis, Kurt Hickey, Rider Red, Will Goldin, Harris Shaw, Noah Grey, Jonah Condon, Chad Conway, Jacob Medlock, Dalton Boyd, Tyler Stark, Zach McDonald, Alex Bryant, Brandon Robinson, Pierre Lenior, Cole Owen, Darrell Cheairs, Tre' Deaton, Alec House, Leeta Prater, Joshanae Tucker, Summer Frain, Kenneth Frain, Brandon Holt, Color Guard: Brooke Wilder, Alyssa McCrory, Claireese Pannell, Amber Fooshe, Ericka Seager, Rachel McCullough, Madison Griggs, Lori Beth Watts, Victoria Adams, Lilly Swilley, Majorettes: Hannah Humphreys, Booke Roaten, Sarah Gaines. Drum Major: Mary Kate Thompson.

Darrell Ivy | *The Image Place*

2013 Pride of New Albany Drum Major - Mary Kate Thompson

East Union enters into division play

East Union Football

With one season as East Union football in the record books, the Urchins have a new challenge ahead.

For the 2013 season, the team will be joining Baldwyn, Hatley, Mantatchie, New Site and Walnut in Division 2-2A.

"That's a big motivation factor," Head Coach Scott Duley said, "You are able to say look, if we win games, if we do well, if I do my job and you do your job then at the end of it if we've qualified for the playoffs then we get to go the playoffs and play for something."

The Urchins are also carrying a roster with 11 seniors after losing ten members to graduation last year.

Those seniors are not only expected to lead the team, they will comprise the majority of starters on offense, defense and special teams, Duley said.

"It may be an over simplification, but a lot of our success will come from them," Duley said, "we are looking for great contributions from a number of seniors who will be starting for the first time."

Among those individuals is D.J. Armstrong who will suit up for the Urchins for one last season as quarterback.

"I've had D.J. all four years, two with Union County football and two at East Union and he's a great kid. Very intelligent, very disciplined, and will do whatever we ask of him," Duley said.

Backing up Armstrong on offense will be senior Evan Bullock on the line and Bryan Wages, a younger player who has put hours of work in the East Union weight room.

"His body has just exploded," Duley said, adding that Wages will also be help in the defensive line.

One other exciting prospect for the offense is Lane Plunk who will line up as wide receiver for the Urchins.

Plunk transferred from Saltillo in 2012 but sat out a year due to MHSAA regulations.

"I love our kids, they will run through a wall if you ask them too. They give everything and then a little more."

- Scott Duley

"Now that Lane can play, he'll be an asset. He can run, he can jump, he can catch," Duley said.

Blake Spruill will continue his role as an all-purpose team member in the running back position for offense, line backer for defense, and serve as kicker on special teams.

"Basically, Blake is critical to our success on the field," Duley said.

Jacob Elder, another senior, and Chandler Scott will also see playing time, their hours of effort, work ethic, and contribution to the team getting noticed by Duley and his coaching staff.

Of the coaching staff, three members are making a return while Assistant Principal and Head Baseball Coach Steven Basil joins the team along with Jacob Dean.

"Football, probably unlike any other sport, is very very dependent on position coaches. Player development is what we've tried to focus on for several years up in the weight room and on the football field. We have a great staff," Duley said.

Even with the pieces in place, there are still areas where the Urchins plan to focus for the upcoming season.

Defense is first on the list, Duley said.

"For the past couple of years, we've been anemic on defense and we are going to try and change that," Duley said.

The focus on strength and conditioning will continue as it always has.

"The weight room has made us a lot stronger and faster," Duley said, "but its more than that, its also given these kids a lot of confidence that maybe they didn't have before."

With out of division games set against Houlka, Potts Camp, Strayhorn and Middleton High School in Middleton, TN, the Urchins will get several tough tests before opening division play on the road at New Site.

But, above wins and losses, Duley has another mindset towards his team.

"The most important thing for us is to teach the young men to model the Lord Jesus before them and to teach them that there are a lot more things out there more important than football," Duley said.

"One of the best things we get is a phone call a year or two after we've had them to say thank you for everything," Duley said.

Head Coach Scott Duley

Second season at East Union

2012 Season:
4-5
(No division games)

Assistant Coaches:
Jeremy Smithey
Drew Dillard
Jacob Dean
Brady Simpson
Steven Basil

Athletic Trainer:
Jeremy Dorrough

2010 and 2011 seasons with Union County Football.

East Union 2013 Schedule

August
23 Houlka
30 @ Middleton, TN

September
06 @ Potts Camp
13 Tupelo Christian Prep
20 Strayhorn

October
04 @ New Site*
11 Walnut*
18 @ Baldwyn*
25 Mantatchie* (Senior Night)

November
01 @ Hatley*

* denotes Division 1-2A game

Donica Phifer I *Gazette Staff*

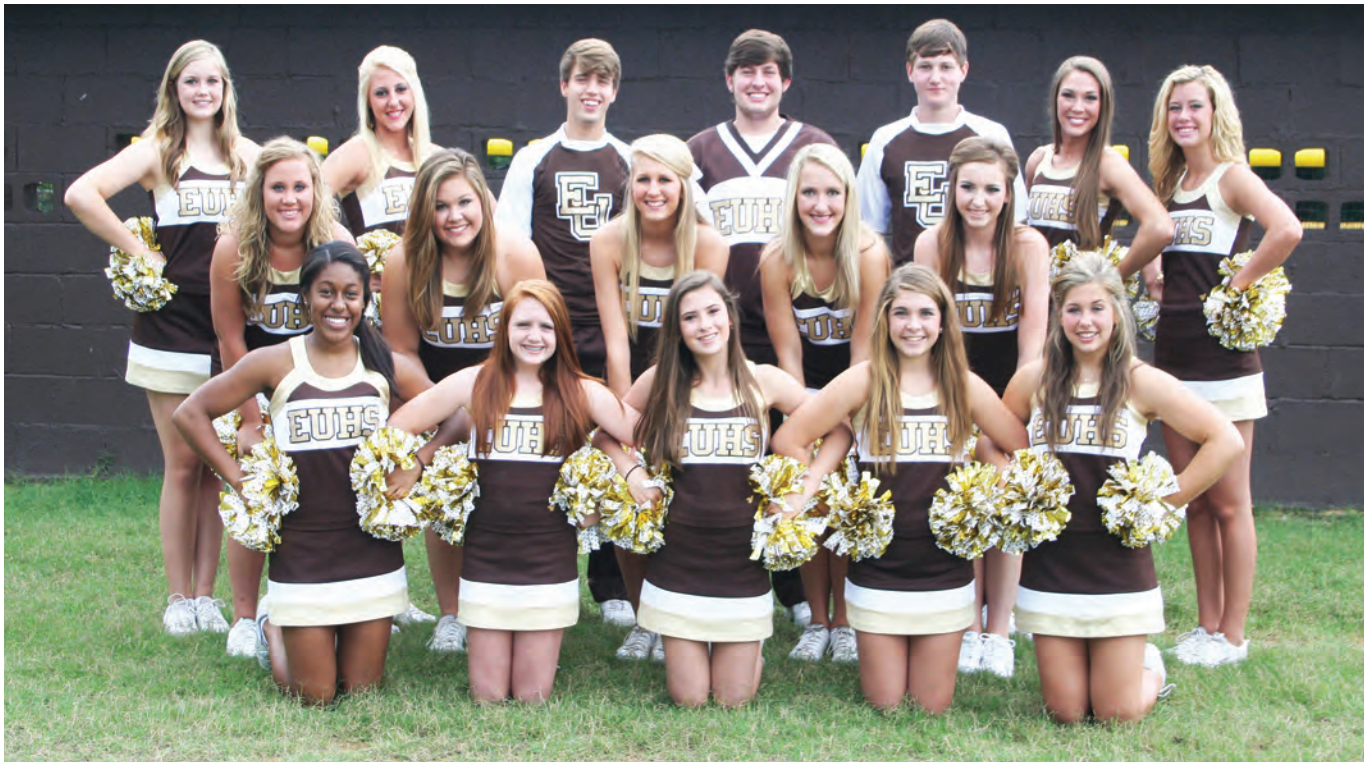
2013 East Union Football Team - Lane Plunk, K.C. Cato, Johnathan Vale, Dallas Wooten, D.J. Armstrong, Blake Spruill, Colton West, Triston Lady, Jamie McCullough, Chase Hall, Lawrence Milsap, Brandon Taylor, Jacob Elder, John Issac Roberts, Ty Ballard, Bailey Spruill, Josh Whitenteon, Eric Ellington, Hartman Hunt, Hunter Wiginton, Ben Prather, Chandelr Scott, Evan Bullock, Brian Wages, Shenteal Ivy, T.J. Hamblin, Zack Crump, Austin Colburn, Joseph Hancock, Tyler Bennett, Logan Cruz, Jacob Hughes, Chance Clayton. Assistant Coaches: Steven Basil, Jacob Dean, Drew Dillar, Brady Simpson, Jeremey Smithey. Head Coach: Scott Duley.

Class of 2014 Seniors

Donica Phifer I *Gazette Staff*

2012-2013 Union County Football Seniors - (Front Row: Left to Right) Brandon Taylor, Ty Ballard, (Second Row: Left to Right) Lawrence Milsap, D.J. Armstrong, Jacob Elder, Blake Spruill, (Third Row: Left to Right) Ben Prather, Chandler Scott, Evan Bullock, Eric Ellington, Hunter Wiggington. Not Pictured: Senior Cheerleaders Chip Gibson and Carol Coker.

East Union Cheerleaders



Donica Phifer | *Gazette Staff*

2013-2014 East Union Cheerleaders - (Front Row: Left to Right) Denira Shawver, Cameron Hollimon, Audrie Randle, Madison Shelton, Calla Basil, (Second Row: Left to Right) Kensie Roberts, Karley Crump, Katie Rowman, Janna Humphreys, Alayna Hitt, (Back Row: Left to Right) Caroline Wigington, Lindsey Hill, Jordon Salmon, Chip Gibson, Josh Whitenton, Carol Coker, Kallie Roberts. Not Pictured: Haleigh Synder.

Union County Band

Donica Phifer | *Gazette Staff*

2013 Union County Band Drum Major - Myriah Street

Class of 2014 Band Members

Benjamin Neal, West Union
Daniel Rodgers, Ingomar
Ericka Ulrich, Ingomar

Donica Phifer | *Gazette Staff*

2013 Union County Band Members - Amber Alten, Chandler Baggett, Nancy Bames, Jacob Benson, Annabelle Botts, Michael Childers, Katelyn Cornelius, Kateri Felter, Ryan Gullick, Tlyer Lindsey, Benjamin Neal, Vincent Palmer, Justin Sanford, Savannah Christie, Austin Foster, William Hancock, Lindsay Lauderdale, Alec Lipsey, Cal McGehee, Audrey Young, Lauren Anderson, Ciarra Beltran, Sarah Chappell, Palience English, Chelsea Gammel, Heather Gammel, Camryn Hall, Daniel Rodgers, Ericka Ulrich, Ashlyn Adams, Kennedy Akin, Noel Akin, Jonathan Barnes, Emily Bruce, Mallery Elbs, Carter Ford, Myranda Hannah, Joshua McDaniel, Steven Nicholson, Sallie Pannell, Amanda Poe, Jason Rakestraw, Rachel Watson, John Wicker. Drum Major: Myriah Street.

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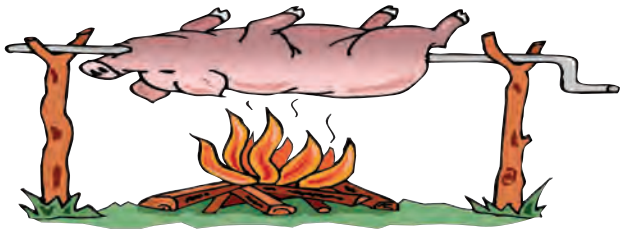

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Donica Phifer I *Gazette Staff*

2013 New Albany Softball Team - (Front Row: Left to Right) Megan Whiteside, Kenidi Sanders, Alexis Mayo, Carrey Beth Doyle, Sydney Collier, Molly Scott, Brooke Moody, (Second Row: Left to Right) Meadow Golden, Sierra Kimbrell, Kaitlyn White, Kaitlyn Cavender, Brittany Prince, D'Anna Gillon, Beth Barnes, Katie Topper, (Back Row: Left to Right) Assistant Coach Tom Zahller, Quinlan Amos, Lauren Boyd, Lauren Cavender, Megan Dye, Destini Knox, Julia Mae Edmondson, Head Coach Shane Sanderson. Not Pictured: Shaiuna Williams, Tyneya Finley, Kiona Finley.

New Albany heads into final season

It's the last ride for New Albany High School's slow-pitch program, one which the team and Head Coach Shane Sanderson plan to make the most of.

"It it sad to know its the last year, but the number of girls who came out for this team really touched my heart," Sanderson said.

Entering his fourth season with the slow-pitch program, the Lady Bulldogs have gone to the playoffs each year.

That's a goal that Sanderson hopes to repeat.

"Last year we went all the way to game 3 of the second round, but maybe this year we can go further," Sanderson said.

The Bulldogs will be replacing eight starting positions with new faces, using a combination of veteran players and new comers.

A couple athletes will also juggle participation in both volleyball and softball.

"I've got a lot of confidence in Lauren Cavender who is our pitcher. I think she's the best slow-pitch pitcher in the state," Sanderson said.

"We are just going to improve our game minute to minute and see where it goes." - Shane Sanderson

Megan Dye could see action in the outfield and at first base, while Quinlan Amos might also be used in multiple spots due to her speed.

Lauren Boyd, a staple for the fast-pitch program, will make the jump into slow-pitch for its final season.

"She's going to be a big help for us," Sanderson said.

An unfamiliar face is senior Destini Knox, who impressed the coaches with her heavy hitting during tryouts.

Also joining the roster are two transfers in Julia Edmondson and Beth Barnes who moved from Hatley.

Both are expected to contribute immediately for the team, Sanderson said.

New Albany 2013 Schedule

August
17 @ West Union Classic Tournament
20 @ Hickory Flat
22 @ Tishomingo County
24 Union County Tournament
26 Hickory Flat
29 Myrtle

September
03 Wheeler
07 Robertson's Sportswear Tournament
09 South Pontotoc
12 @ Shannon *
14 New Albany Invitational Tournament
16 @ Houston *
19 Shannon *
21 @ Holly Springs
28 @ North Pontotoc Tournament
30 Houston *

October
03 @ Belmont
10 Holly Springs

* denotes division game

Donica Phifer | *Gazette Staff*

2013 East Union Softball Team - (Front Row: Left to Right) Natalie Hatcher, Ashley Rea, Emma Dunlap, Grace Roberts, Haley Barkley, Katelin White, Denira Shawver, (Second Row: Left to Right) Raelee Bell, Logen Ellis, Mallery Ellis, Abagale Blair, Sallie Pannell, Jaley White, Kensie Roberts, Brooke Austin, Macy Hitt, (Back Row: Left to Right) Assistant Coach Zane Treadaway, Mallory Roberts, Rebecca Sheffield, Savannah Alexander, Katey Hunt, Samantha Lineberry, Lauren Whitenton, Kallie Roberts, Stephanie Hardy, Tianna Castillo, Callie Frazier, Head Coach Josh Blythe.

Transfers give Lady Urchins a boost

With the loss of three-time division player of the year Ashley Leech, Head Coach Josh Blythe had some big shoes to fill for his 2013 team.

Enter two transfers in Savannah Alexander from Baldwyn and Katey Hunt from Mooreville, and the Lady Urchins outlook has changed.

"These two girls are power hitters, they are going to give us a one-two punch that we really need with hitting," Blythe said.

Along with the two seniors is pitcher Mallory Roberts who will once again anchor the defensive side and be a team leader.

"I really am depending on Mallory, she's a great pitcher and her experience will help us a lot," Blythe said.

Other starters for the team are young - a crop of freshman and one sophmore - but all have hit the field for the Urchins since their junior high days.

Even so, Blythe expects a bit of position shifting in the early days of the season.

"It's really about finding the right fit, whatever works best for us is what we will do," Blythe said.

The team also tried a different approach this summer, hitting the weight room three times a week under the direction of Blythe and East Union's Football and Power Lifting Coach Scott Duley.

"I expect a lot out of them, but they work hard and I know they can do it."

- Josh Blythe

"I've seen girls go from 120 pounds and deadlifting 100 pounds to deadlifting 220 pounds over the summer," Blythe said, "And I really give Coach Duley the credit. He helped me make the program that the girls follow, and the girls really love it."

The reiging 2-2A Division Champions will look to repeat that title in 2013, but the Urchins also have another goal in mind.

"I want to play for a North State final," Blythe said, "I'd like these girls to experience that and for this team to make history at East Union."

The Urchins kicked off the season with two tournaments at Mooreville and West Union.

East Union 2013 Schedule

August
10 Mooreville Jamboree
17 East Union Classic Tournament
20 @ Falkner
22 Mooreville
24 Union County Tournament
27 Myrtle
29 Ingomar

September
03 @ South Pontotoc
05 @ Mantatchie
07 Robertson's Sportswear Tournament
10 @ Walnut *
12 @ North Pontotoc
17 Bruce *
19 Walnut *
23 Wheeler
24 @ Bruce *

October
01 @ Strayhorn *
03 @ Myrtle
07 Falkner
08 @ West Union

*denotes division game

Donica Phifer I *Gazette Staff*

2013 Ingomar Softball Team - (Front Row: Left to Right) Katelyn Jolly, Ashley Forester, Kortney Parker, Addy Doway, Carson Grisham, Alex Wilhite, (Second Row: Left to Right) Kaci Deaton, Keri Deaton, Kelley Fooshee, Allie Williams, Abby Deaton, (Third Row: Left to Right) Lauren Coltharp, Madison Willard, Sara McDonald, Abbie Williams, Maggie Smithey, Hope Mason, Gara Beth Self, (Fourth Row: Left to Right) Lauren Gooch, Lauren Thompson, Erin Wall, Lauren Koom, Morgan Gooch, Kasey Carson, Kelly Mayo.

Young team to take field for Ingomar

Ingomar Softball

To quote Ingomar Head Coach Andy Wilbanks, the Lady Falcons are headed into a 'youth movement'.

After missing the playoffs for two years, the Falcons are still in flux with its 26 players.

"We have four or five positions that are wide open for someone," Wilbanks said, "This team will be a mix of kids who played a little last year and some brand new faces."

Those new faces could even belong to seventh graders, Wilbanks said.

"It's not about what grade you are in, but about the talent and work ethic you have," Wilbanks said.

The team will be lead by its two upperclassmen, senior Lauren Koom and junior Erin Wall.

Koom will take to the circle as the Falcons pitcher while Wall is a question mark.

"She didn't play last year, but she has played slow-pitch before," Wilbanks said.

Wilbanks also expects Kelly Mayo and Kelly Fooshee to see qualty time inside the infield.

"Our goal is to work hard every day, practice hard, and I think if we do that there will be success."
- Andy Wilbanks

"It's a talented group, but they are young. They can't help that, that is why we are just going to throw them out there. We might have some growing pains, but it will pay off in the future," Wilbanks said of the defending Union County Champions.

With what Wilbanks calls a couple of 'disappointing' years, the goal for the group is to find their way back into the playoffs.

"As a program we are accustomed to that, and I want the girls to have that experience of a playoff game," Wilbanks said.

Ingomar began its 2013 season at the West Union Classic on Aug. 17.

Ingomar 2013 Schedule

August
17 @ West Union Classic Tournament
20 @ North Pontotoc
22 Bruce
24 Union County Tournament
27 Baldwyn
29 East Union

September
03 Hickory Flat*
05 North Pontotoc
07 Roberton's Sportswear Tournament
10 Myrtle*
12 TBA
17 West Union*
19 @ Hickory Flat*
24 @ Walnut
26 @ Myrtle*

October
01 @ Pine Grove
03 @ West Union*
07 @ Bruce
10 TBA

*denotes division game

Donica Phifer I *Gazette Staff*

2013 Myrtle Softball Team - (Front Row: Left to Right) Haley Matkins, Kristen Young, Allie Bishop, Brianna Brassell, Amber Cook, (Second Row: Left to Right) Callie Denton, Kellan Tanner, Karlie Bolden, Lauren Coggin, Heather Smith, Jamiya Moore, (Back Row: Left to Right) Audrey Kent, Ashton Hogue, Tyesha Bills, Courtney Bingham, Keeley Chunn.

Myrtle sets sights on postseason play

With one player lost to graduation, the Myrtle Lady Hawks feel pretty good about this season.

The Hawks made another trip into the playoffs during the 2012 campaign, ultimately falling to 1A State Champion Smithville in the second round.

That achievement came after earning a second place finish in division play behind county rival West Union.

This year also marks a first for Marty Cook, who takes the head coaching reigns from 16-year coach Robert Gordon.

"Obviously, he has some big shoes to fill," Cook said, "But I feel good about it."

Gordon led the Lady Hawks to seven state titles from 1997 to 2005, setting a standard for slow-pitch softball that the current roster hopes to repeat.

For this season, Cook will rely on his class of seniors to set the tone with experience and leadership.

Five-year starter Emily Cook will lead the Hawks from the circle for one final year, while team captain Allie Bishop anchors the infield from first base.

"We are definitely going to surprise some people."
- Marty Cook

"She is one of those kids who is always positive and always trying to keep everyone up, I'm looking for a lot of offensive play from her," Cook said.

The third senior, left fielder, Keely Chunn is the leader in the outfield.

"Every year the ultimate goal is playing for a state championship," Cook said, "We have high expectations for this season."

Those expectations include winning a division title. "The division title is really the first step, and then once you are into playoffs there's no telling what can happen," Cook said.

Myrtle began its 2013 season on Aug. 17 as part of the West Union Classic Tournament and opened play at home with the Oxford Chargers on Aug. 20.

Myrtle 2013 Schedule

August
17 @ West Union
Classic Tournament
20 Oxford
22 Tupelo
24 Union County
Tournament
27 @ East Union
29 @ New Albany

September
03 West Union*
05 @ Oxford
07 Robertson's
Sportswear Tournament
10 @ Ingomar*
12 Hickory Flat*
17 Falkner
19 @ West Union*
24 Pine Grove
26 Ingomar*

October
01 @ Hickory Flat*
03 East Union
08 Independence
10 @Tupelo

* denotes division play

Donica Phifer I *Gazette Staff*

2013 West Union Softball Team - (Front Row: Left to Right) Harley Steen, Hailey Steen, Anna Grubbs, Shyann Garrison, Mattie Pilcher, Jenny Thompson, (Second Row: Left to Right) Marley Long, Brooke Sullivan, Maegan Whittington, Kylie Massengill, Chase Coffey, (Back Row: Left to Right) Gracen Conley, Callie Baggett, Julianna Garner, Brittany Taylor, BAiley Bogue, Samantha Bridges, Ashley Hatton.

Lady Eagles focus on key players

With four girls lost to graduation, West Union finds itself needing to fill some gaps.

"It seems like we have to do it every year," Head Coach Lisa Bogue said, "So we are used to replacing and retraining, so to speak."

Even with the four graduates, West Union boasts a roster of talent which won the division championship and made it to the North Half Finals w here the season ended against two-time defending 1A Champion Smithville.

This year, seniors Julianna Garner, Bailey Bogue and Brittany Taylor will provide the anchor for the Lady Eagles.

Junior Callie Baggett will again take to the circle as pitcher, and Bogue expects her to perform well in her penultimate slow-pitch season.

With such a competitive schedule for the 2013 season, Bogue knows that the Eagles will have to play smart and fight hard to return to the playoffs.

"Just do the big things right and the little things will follow."

- Lisa Bogue

"All of the schools in our division are tough and they all have so much school pride and history....you never anyone for granted. A game can change like that," Bogue said.

Beyond their abilities on the softball field, Bogue also challenges her players to be a success in the classroom.

Last year, her team posted a GPA of 94.842 - just shy of an A.

This year she has challenged the Eagles to make that A.

"Above all, they are student-athletes so that's the expectation - the demands I ask in the classroom are way more than I ask out here," Bogue said.

West Union 2013 Schedule

August
17 West Union Classic Tournament
21 @ Hickory Flat
20 Independence
22 @ South Pontotoc
24 Union County Tournament
27 Mantatchie
30 @ Falkner

September
03 @ Myrtle*
05 Hickory Flat*
07 Robertson's Sportswear Tournament
10 @ Pine Grove
12 @ Mantatchie
17 @ Ingomar*
19 Myrtle*
24 @ Oxford
26 @ Hickory Flat*
28 North Pontotoc Tournament
30 @ Belmont

October
03 Ingomar*
04 Jumpertown
08 East Union (Senior Night)

*denotes division game

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Donica Phifer I *Gazette Staff*

2013 New Albany Cross Country Team - (Front Row: Left to Right) Katie Brooks, Ken Olson, Anna Walls, Hannah Harris, Samuel Martin, Sydney Meggs, (Second Row: Left to Right) Maeghan Martin, Rachel Rainey, Carly Hill, Sarah Kat Harris, Luke Hamblin, Adalyn Aldridge, Anna Rose Hamblin, Hailey Prince, Alyssa Greer, Maggie Creekmore, (Third Row: Left to Right) Assistant Coach Mike Beam, Guillermo Garcia, Hudsosn Ranager, Natalie Pullman, Garrett Meggs, Trace Thompson, Kirsten Greer, Lauren Boyd, Jose Tavela, Head Coach Dorothy Denton.

NAHS depending on first year runners

This year, the Bulldogs are all about youth.

With a team of 35 runners, 20 are entering seventh or eighth grade.

"They are young, but sometimes that's a good thing," Head Coach Dorothy Denton said.

The bulk of the boys team are supported by a group of sophomore runners, led by Guillermo Garcia.

"Guillermo is one of our strongest, I feel very good about his season," Denton said.

The larger focus for the boys will be finding seven guys who can create a team and potentially take the Bulldogs to state to run for a title.

"That was the issue last year, there was talent but we didn't have enough bodies to compete as a team. You need seven for our class and we only had five runners," Denton said.

The girls will create the interesting dynamic with a few up and coming runners challenging some of Denton's older squad.

"I've enjoyed watching that, seeing these younger girls really push the older ones to perform better," Denton said.

Laura Creekmoore and Lauren Boyd will lead the Lady Bulldogs, with 14 junior high girls making up the majority of the team.

"I do have to point out

"As a team, its about staying together and motivating each other. These kids are great at that."
- Dorothy Denton

Katie Brooks, who has been great, Denton said, "She's a freshman and she's really hit it off with Laura, the two of them make a great pair and push one another."

Anna Rose Hamblin is another member who Denton expects to have a great year.

"You know, I'm just excited for this. I like having so many of them out here. It's not even that they are young and sometimes you want young ones. They push a little harder and fight a little more," Denton said.

New Albany kicks off its 2013 season with the Pontotoc Invitational in September before moving on to Saltillo.

Then, in October, the Bulldogs will host their first meet at New Albany Elementary School.

"That's a huge thing for us, and I think its going to be great for our program," Denton said.

After the 2-4A Division Championships, the team ends its regular season at Tupelo.

New Albany 2013 Schedule

Sept. 15	@ Pontotoc Invitational
Sept. 21	@ Saltillo Invitational
Sept. 28	Southern Tees Challenge
Oct. 05	New Albany
Oct. 12	Union County Championships
Oct. 24	@ Trace Lake (Division Championship)
Oct. 26	@ Tupelo Invitational

Donica Phifer I *Gazette Staff*

2013 East Union Cross Country Team - (Front Row: Left to Right) Emily Bruce, Hannah Courtney, Teresa Cobb, Amber Janis, Jadon Snyder, Beth Skelley, Allie Epting, Haleigh Snyder, Haley Grubbo, Mary Kate Nobles, (Second Row: Left to Right) Maggie Meinz, Karmon Skelley, Joey Pace, Jacob Raines, Zane Wilkinson, Hunter Nobles, Jordon Salmon, Cody Taylor, Derrick Owens, Steven Ragsdale, Cayce Smith.

East Union set sights on more state titles

With four state titles in the past four years, the East Union Urchins have established a tradition of winning.

After claiming a Class 2A boys title and a third place Class 2A girls distinction in 2012, the Urchins are ready to take on a potential state sweep in November.

"We only lost two runners to graduation, and one member of our girls team to another sport," Head Coach Nathan McLellan said.

The bulk of the 2012 boys squad remains intact with captains Jonathan Vale and Blake Rakestraw expected to anchor and lead the guys.

"Jonathan really provides a lot of leadership on our team... Blake is tough and gritty, he's great at being a leader for us. Really challenge's some of the younger guys," McLellen said.

The boys team has also established a camaraderie outside of cross country that gives a family sort of atmosphere at practice.

"They are a group who will sit around after practice and hang out, they push one another to be better," McLellen said.

Returning All-State runner Emily Bruce, junior Hannah Courtney and Carmon Skelley, will hold the girls together.

"Carmon has been on two state championship teams, so she really understands what it takes to win, " McLellan said.

Courtney is the 'glue' for the team, doing a lot of things, which often go unnoticed by her teammates, McLellen said.

"She really leads by example, always has a great attitude. Always teaching and encouraging the others, " McLellen said.

"They have become a family, and I think that's one of the reasons they've had the success they have had."
- Nathan McLellen

For the girls, incoming freshman Cayce Smith will be taking the leap to join the cross-country team in addition to her success in track.

"Her success and work ethic has really rubbed off on the others," McLellen said.

With a return to the state finals on their minds, McLellen credits the friendship between all of the runners and the additional coaching from his assistants Jennifer Bruce and Stephanie Scott for the atmosphere on the team.

"They have high expectations for themselves. That makes us excited for this upcoming year and what it could hold," McLellen said.

The Urchins begin the scheduled round of meets at Tupelo Christian Prep on Saturday before diving into competitive stops at Pontotoc, Saltillo and Corinth.

"The one thing I know is that this team, especially the boys, aren't satisfied with last year. The boys want a repeat, the girls want to win and they are putting in the work to get there," McLellen said.

East Union 2013 Schedule

Aug. 24 @ TCPS Invitational	Oct. 05 @ Watson Ford Invitational
Sept. 14 @ Pontotoc Invitational	Oct. 12 Union County Championships
Sept. 21 @ Saltillo Invitational	Oct. 19 @ Corinth Invitational
Sept. 28 Southern Tees Challenge	Oct. 26 @ Division Championships

Donica Phifer I *Gazette Staff*

2013 Ingomar Cross Country Team - (Front Row: Left to Right) Kelly Mayo, Kelsey Ferguson, (Second Row: Left to Right) Clare Hall, Carley Hall, Lauren Watson, Sydney Roberts, Cassie Thompson, (Third Row: Left to Right) Head Coach KevinWilliams, Tyler Warren, Noah Bryant, Jon-Brooks Almand. Not Pictured: Caleb Gullick, Kyle Kaines, Casey Rorie, Jonathan Sweatt, Macy Kirk.

Falcons building on last years success

Entering a fourth season with Ingomar, Head Coach Kevin Williams feels pretty good about the progress his program is making.

"The thing is, we haven't had a program nearly as long as some of the other schools in the county, but we are building on what we have," Williams said.

That effort is led by senior Tyler Warren who ran to a third place finish in the 1A State Championship in 2012.

Warren was one of four top twenty finishers for the Falcons - the others including Sydney Roberts in seventh, Kelly Maoy at eleventh, and Noah Byrant in ninteenth.

The boys team will consist of five members, Warren and fellow senior Jonathan Sweatt anchoring the team.

Byrant marks the other returning face for the boys.

Roberts and Mayo, both beginning their freshman year, support the girls team

"Those two are our fastest girls, but they've really pushed our older members to perform better," Williams said.

Two other contributors, sophomores Macy Kirk and Lauren Watson, will also help anchor the girls side.

"I'm really expecting them to step up and help us out," Williams said.

The team has spent their summer break pushing themselves to get better, Williams said.

"Sweatt and Warren, especially, have trained very hard this summer. They both want to be better runners this year than they were last year," William said.

"I want them to do the best they can and, more importantly, to be good people. To develop some character and confidence."
- Kevin Williams

Warren has set a personal goal of going for an individual title in Class 1A, Williams said.

"He's got the talent, and the work ethic to make it happen," Williams said.

Like Warren, all of the Falcon's runners have decided on individual goals for the upcoming season.

For team goals, Williams focus is keeping it simple and allowing the team to improve at their own pace.

"I know that might not be the 'coach' thing to do, but so far its worked well for us," Williams said.

The Falcons have a schedule of competitive matches, reflecting the nature of cross-country in Class 1A.

"For whatever reason, 1A is always tough. It's a fight between eight or ten teams every year," Williams said.

Ingomar opens its schedule with a visit to Hickory Flatt before competitions at Pontotoc and Saltillo.

The team also pays a visit to 4A Corinth later in the season.

Ingomar 2013 Schedule

Sept. 07	@ Hickory Flat Invitational
Sept. 14	@ Pontotoc Invitational
Sept. 21	Saltillo Invitational
Sept. 28	Southern Tees Challenge
Oct. 12	Union County Championship
Oct. 19	@ Corinth Invitational
Oct. 26	Division Championship

Donica Phifer | *Gazette Staff*

2013 Myrtle Cross Country Team - (Front Row: Left to Right) Haleigh Jamison, Hailey Brown, Ellie Fitts, Caroline Greer, Madison Gray, (Second Row: Left to Right) Samantha Shettles, Laykin Dulaney, Geniesha Montgomery, Ivory Montgomery, Jenna Sampson, Stephanie Floyd, (Third Row: Left to Right) Hunter Bailey, Josh Sampson, Hunter Hall, Marquez Howell, Braxton Smith, Shaphan Smith, Hunter Brown. Not Pictured: Tyler Daniel, Bobby High, Cole Wyndam, Michaela Bolen, Andrea Chism, Shelby Gonzales, Kitana High, Megan Lowrey, Rachel Peeler.

Stacked roster gives post-season hopes

There's a lot of talent running around the Myrtle campus.

A team of 26 makes up the 2013 Hawks squad, with a depth of talent returning and a handful of newcomers, which Head Coach Chris Greer is expecting big things from.

"We have the defending state champion in girls track in Kitana High," Greer said, along with Marquez Howell as the division champion.

Howell will lead the boys team, which makes up the bulk of new runners in the Hawks program.

"With so many new ones, we really just want to improve from week to week," Greer said.

Of the new runners for the boys, Greer names Hunter Bailey, Braxton Smith, and Josh Sampson as the three to watch.

On the girls side, a team of 11 will hit the road with an eye on a state championship.

"We have so many returning runners, and they've all accomplished a lot here," Greer said.

Along with High, the Lady Hawks boast eight former All-State runners in Ellie Fitz, Caroline Greer, Genisha Montgomery, Ivory Montgomery, Rachel Peeler, Megan Lowery and Andea Chism.

"It's all about improving from week to week."
- Chris Greer

With that amount of depth and talent, Greer plans to spend the season pushing the girls to run their best races.

"Last year, we had a bad state meet and I think we really came up short. This year, for these girls, it's all about changing that," Greer said.

The Lady Hawks also gained a new student, runner Stephanie Floyd from West Union.

"She's going to be great this year," Greer said.

The Hawks will begin their season Saturday with a meet at Tupelo Christian Prep, who are the defending 1A Girls champions in cross country.

Other meets include Pontotoc, Saltillo and Corinth - with the 4A school picked among the top 10 in pre-season rankings.

Myrtle 2013 Schedule

Aug. 24	@ TCPS Invitational	Sept. 25	Southern Tees Challenge
Sept. 07	@ Hickory Flat Invitational	Oct. 05	@ New Albany Invitational
Sept. 14	@ Pontotoc Invitational	Oct. 12	Union County Championships
Sept. 21	@ Saltillo Invitational	Oct. 26	Division Championship

Donica Phifer | *Gazette Staff*

2013 West Union Cross Country Team - (Front Row: Left to Right) Hailey Steen, Jennah Morris, Elizabeth Fooshee, Isibelle Jackson, (Second Row: Left to Right) Andrew Trivelli, Austin Graham, Harley Steen, Haley Long, Savannah Shirley, David Green, Chandler Baggett, (Third Row: Left to Right) Chase Cooper, Myles Steen, Ryan Wallace, Morgan Bishop, Emily Canoy, Jacob Shirley, Dillon Clayton, Randy Long, Hayden Basil, (Fourth Row: Left to Right) Hunter Jennings, Eli Basil, Adam Grubbs, Andrew Childers, Helen Grace Grisham, Blake Carruth, Zack Dillard, Ethan Dillard.

Eagles depending on veteran runners

It's a mixed bag of veterans and first-time runners preparing to run for the West Union Eagles.

This year also marks a first for new Cross Country Head Coach Nathan Tidwell.

Tidwell took the reigns from Hugh Yates, who spent three seasons with the Eagles and lead the girls team to a 2010 1A State Championship.

Tidwell's team includes around 30 runners with most of the returning members on the boys side.

"We have around 20 guys who will suit up for the boys," Tidwell said.

Those runners include two seniors in Chase Cooper and 2012 All-State Runner Hunter Jennings.

"Both of those guys are leaders, I'm really looking for them to lead some of our younger guys," Tidwell said.

While there is plenty of experience for the boys, the girls team will be headed by sophomore's Savannah Shirley and Haley Long.

The girls team will have eight or 10 members, Tidwell said.

"The team is going to be really young, a lot of seventh and eighth graders who are out here for the first time. Savannah has done a lot of work with those girls, she's really gotten them excited about running," Tidewell said.

"They've been working hard and as long as they keep working hard, everything else will fall into place."
- Nathan Tidwell

Another standout runner Tidwell expects to contribute is freshman Austin Kiddy, a kid who "ran really well" for the Eagles in 2012.

With two state titles under their belts in the past six years, the expectations are high for the season.

The Eagles will spend much of August focusing on practice and team building, as their first meet of the season is in September.

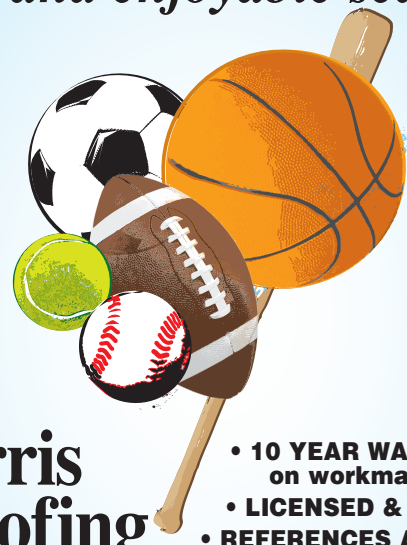
"We are starting with one of the most competitive meets," Tidwell said of the Pontotoc Invitational.

Other meets include the Southern Tees Challenge and a joint trip with East Union to Mississippi College.

West Union 2013 Schedule

Sept. 14	@ Pontotoc Invitational	Oct. 5	@ Mississippi College
Sept. 21	Tallahatchie River Fest	Oct. 12	Union County Championships
Sept. 28	Southern Tees Challenge	Oct. 13	Division Championship

We hope you have a safe and enjoyable season!



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Donica Phifer I *Gazette Staff*

2013 New Albany Volleyball Team - (Front Row: Left to Right) Carly Spencer, Kaitlyn Cavender, Abby Spencer, Carrington Barry, Beth Teague, Sydney Collier, Kaitlyn White, (Second Row: Left to Right) Faye Turnage, Mary Day, Hannah Anderson, Lenzi Sanderson, Lauren Cavender, Megan Dye, Alyssa Greer, Eira Luna, (Third Row: Left to Right) Arianna Golden, Grace Thompson, Emma Myers, Christina Jeffries, Erin Michael Carter, Anna Frances Stroud, Darby Mills, Emma Wilson, Reese Neely, Emma Blakemore, Meadow Golden, and Head Coach Lashay Ashford.

Lady Bulldogs focused on winning

Going into their second season New Albany's Lady Bulldogs have a different mindset.

"The nerves are gone, it's time to play," Head Coach Lashay Ashford said.

The Bulldogs won four matches during their first season, which Ashford calls a "surprisingly good" one as the majority of the team had never played volleyball before.

The team will be lead by its two captains – seniors Erin Michael Carter and Darby Mills.

"Beyond Carter and Mills, it's really my starting six on varsity. They are twice as good as they were last year. I'm looking for all of them to step up," Ashford said.

The Bulldog also have a group of young talent who will take their first steps onto the court as part of the junior varsity team.

Four varsity members also took their time off from the sport to be involved in club volleyball - participating in games at the University of Mississippi.

"That investment from them is going to make this year extremely good," Ashford said.

Another benefit for the Lady Bulldogs is the division tournament that closes out the regular season.

"That is our goal for this year, we want to make it out of division play and into the playoffs. Not only is it a personal best for me, but these girls can make history as the first volleyball team in the playoffs," Ashford said.

"I think last year was our growing experience,this year is all about winning."
- Lashay Ashford

The new tournament format eliminates heading into the matches as one of the top finishers, instead the top three teams in the tournament advance to post-season play.

For Ashford, entering into her second year as the Bulldogs coach has been about routine, though not the usual sort you would expect.

"We have a lot of fun. I'm all about fun because the girls respond to that," Ashford said.

That includes music during practice and a few impromtu dance parties.

"My girls are sponges, they just soak up whatever I tell them. It might take them one or two tries to get it right but they listen and they respond to what I give them," Ashford said.

New Albany 2013 Schedule

August
17 @ Pontotoc
Invitational Tournament
19 @ Middleton, TN
22 @ Tupelo
27 Pontotoc
29 @ H.W. Byers
31 @ Lady Raiders
Tournament (V)

September
03 Tishomingo County
05 Corinth
07 @ Lady Raider's
Tournament (JV)
10 @ Tishomingo
County
12 @ Potts Camp
14 Ripley
17 Middleton, TN
19 Belmont
24 H.W. Byers

October
01 @ Pontotoc
12 Divison Tournament
(@ Ripley)
15 Potts Camp
17 @ Ripley

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